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General Assembly

Seventy-first session

Official Records

26th plenary meeting
Monday, 10 October 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Peeseen de Buyzswerve (Belgium), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda items 9 and 13 (*continued*)

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/71/3)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/71/155)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): In connection with agenda item 9, I would like to recall that, pursuant to resolution 58/316, of 1 July 2004, the Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided, at its 2nd plenary meeting, held on 16 September, to consider agenda item 9 in its entirety in plenary meeting, on the understanding that the administrative programme and budgetary aspects should be dealt with by the Fifth Committee.

At the same meeting, the Assembly took note of the clarification that, in implementing resolution 58/316 to consider item 9 in its entirety in plenary meeting, the relevant parts of Chapter I of the report (A/71/3) that are under agenda items already allocated to the Main Committees would be considered by the Committee concerned for final action by the General Assembly.

In connection with agenda item 13, members will recall that, pursuant to resolution 57/270 B, the Assembly decided to consider under the item the chapters of the annual report of the Economic and Social Council relevant to the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including through the participation of the President of the Council in its discussions.

I now give the floor to the President of the Economic and Social Council, His Excellency Mr. Oh Joon, to introduce the report of the Council.

Mr. Oh Joon (President, Economic and Social Council): I have the honour to introduce to the General Assembly the 2016 report (A/71/3) of the Economic and Social Council.

Entering its seventieth year, the 2016 session of the Council focused on what was needed for the initial implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. That included the work of the Council's segments and forums, of the various functional and regional commissions,and of expert bodies, all of which are instrumental in the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The 2016 session of the Council provided a common space for Governments and stakeholders to come together to advance sustainable development and other key issues. Please allow me to briefly share some highlights of the session.

First, the Council conducted its primary follow-up and review of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

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was successfully held under the theme "Ensuring that no one is left behind". Twenty-two countries presented their voluntary national reviews on how they planned to achieve the ambitious vision embodied in the 2030 Agenda. The inaugural Economic and Social Council Forum on Financing for Development follow-up provided a solid, dedicated and inclusive platform for substantive deliberations on how to finance sustainable development, along with a follow-up to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Secondly, we explored ways for the United Nations system to respond more effectively to the changes in the development landscape. The Development Cooperation Forum deliberated on ways to improve the alignment of the United Nations development system with the demands of the new Agenda. The Economic and Social Council dialogue on the subject of the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system offered an opportunity for Member States to consider ways to equip the United Nations to better support the implementation of the new Agenda. I am confident that the dialogue will be able to contribute to implementing resolution 67/226, on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review this year, which will be a significant tool for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Thirdly, the Council enhanced its relevance to what is happening in the world by addressing emerging global threats, challenges and humanitarian emergencies. It held a special meeting on inequality, and special briefings on the Zika virus and the El Niño phenomenon. It also advanced integrated responses to peace and sustainable development.

Last but not least, the Council strengthened multi-stakeholder partnerships through its meetings and forums, including the Partnership Forum and Youth Forum. We had a chance to hear diverse voices from civil society, the private sector and academia in our global dialogue on a sustainable future. The huge interest shown by various segments of society highlighted the need for us to engage more effectively with all relevant actors in a spirit of partnership and inclusion. That interest, which is described in more detail in the report, illustrates how the Council has captured the spirit and the vision of the new global development agenda. The entire Economic and Social Council system has a central role to play in realizing this vision. We should therefore build on the work already carried out and strengthen the momentum generated by the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the other milestone agreements of the past year. Moving forward, we need to focus on establishing a collaborative platform that will support our concrete actions to achieve the future we want.

A renewed spirit of cooperation on the part of all will be key in overcoming the daunting tasks ahead to achieve the SDGs. For the United Nations, development is a realm in which a win-win approach is not only possible but almost inevitable. The cooperative efforts and commitments of all Member States and relevant stakeholders are critical for the entire United Nations development system, with the Economic and Social Council at its core.

On behalf of the 2016 session of the Economic and Social Council Bureau, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the strong collaboration and support of Member States and the United Nations development system. I am confident that the Council, as guided by its new President, His Excellency Ambassador Frederick Shava, will work to successfully achieve its objectives for the 2017 session. I invite all members to continue their engagement and cooperation with the Economic and Social Council at the current session.

Mr. De Lara Rangel (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, on behalf of the Government and the people of Mexico, allow me to extend our sincerest condolences to our brotherly nation Haiti at this difficult and painful time.

My delegation appreciates the presentation of the report (A/71/3) of the Economic and Social Council for 2016.

For Mexico, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a State commitment. In assuming its international responsibility on the global stage, Mexico has focused its efforts on ensuring that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) bring about truly great transformations on our peace and security agenda and in the way in which the United Nations works to build a peaceful world for future generations. The transformative change towards a new peace paradigm, known as "sustainable peace", places human beings at the centre of our collective action. In particular, this peace is solidly based on sustainable and inclusive development, combating poverty and inequality and providing access to justice and the rule of law as the most effective means of preventing conflict and improving people's lives.

To implement the 2030 Agenda, Mexico supports the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council so that it can propose sound public policies, including through the High-level Political Forum, at which, last July, Mexico presented its programme and described its progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The review of the Economic and Social Council scheduled for 2017 must also improve the Council's role as a platform for 30 subsidiary bodies and the various social and economic actors committed to the 2030 Agenda. As we have repeatedly said, it is of vital importance that there should be no attempt to adapt the Agenda to the existing structures and inert practices of the Organization.

To achieve the desired coherence, the Economic and Social Council must ensure that there is no duplication of roles and mandates with other United Nations funds, programmes, bodies and specialized agencies and must foster synergies with the General Assembly. In that regard, the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, which we are now beginning, provides an opportunity for generating urgent and necessary changes in the development pillar, based on dialogue on the long-term positioning of the United Nations development system and carried out within the framework of the Economic and Social Council. It is also necessary to consider the particularities of middle-income countries, which continue to confront considerable challenges to development.

Mexico is committed to advancing several of the issues on the Economic and Social Council agenda that are aligned with the 2030 Agenda. By way of example, we rely on the adoption of the New Urban Agenda in Quito so that we can reinvent our cities from a sustainable perspective, while improving equity and well-being and reducing exclusion and sociospatial segregation. And in December my country will host in Cancun the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, given our commitment as an extremely diverse country to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

In May 2017, Mexico will also provide the venue at which the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction will assess the Sendai Framework in the light of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and will set targets for risk reduction and mitigation. We firmly believe that, given climate change, rapid urbanization and water-management difficulties, inter alia, the risk of disaster is never zero. For that reason, President Peña Nieto, together with President Gurib-Fakim of Mauritius, has co-chaired the High-level Panel on Water since the beginning of the year. The Panel's action plan, which was launched by its 11 high-level members a few weeks ago, will enable States and diverse stakeholders to coordinate their actions.

In order to leave no one behind, we must ensure that cooperation for development is more effective and predictable, pursuant to paragraph 58 of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. In that regard, the collaboration of the United Nations system with forums such as the Global Alliance for Effective Cooperation on Development can prepare for a new transformative vision for sustainable development.

The Assembly can count on our active and constructive participation in all related work.

Mr. Sinha (India): India attaches great importance to the work of the Economic and Social Council. We commend the outgoing President and the Bureau for their stewardship of its activities.

I would like to extend our congratulations to the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Zimbabwe on his resumption of the current presidency of the Economic and Social Council, and would like to assure him of our steadfast support to him and his Bureau in their work. We are grateful for the report (A/71/3) of the Economic and Social Council for the year 2016, which usefully enumerates the activities of the Council.

We would like to congratulate the Economic and Social Council for organizing the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, convened under its auspices, the first since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Forum offered a place for policymakers from around the world to exchange their ideas on how to accelerate the implementation of the far-reaching 2030 Agenda in a consistent, effective manner. It included voluntary national reviews by 22 countries and thematic reviews of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Fully committed to ensuring a life of dignity for all its people, India intends to present its voluntary national review at the Assembly session next year, with the aim of sharing its experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We have integrated the Sustainable Development Goals framework into

our national development strategy. We have decided to dedicate one day in each session of our Parliament for discussions focused solely on the progress made on the SDGs. India's success in sustaining robust economic growth to eradicate poverty will contribute in no small measure to the global achievement of the SDGs. The process of doing so will bring forth technologies and pathways to progress that can be shared with other developing countries to enable them to achieve sustainable development.

As we move forward, the realization of the developed countries' commitments to resource mobilization for strengthening capacities and technical assistance to developing countries will be critical. In that regard, we think the technology facilitation mechanism will be instrumental. An important achievement of the Economic and Social Council in that context was the discussion organized at the first annual multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, to which all relevant stakeholders actively contributed in their areas of expertise. We are sure that at the next session the Forum will again further build upon its existing strength.

We commend the efforts of the Economic and Social Council in organizing the 2016 inaugural Forum on Financing for Development follow-up, which provided a solid platform for susbstantive deliberation with the representatives of intergovernmental bodies and the senior management of the Bretton Woods Institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. They affirmed strong commitment to the full and timely implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and recognized that it provides a global framework for financing sustainable development and is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, while supporting and complementing it and helping to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and action.

At a meeting organized by the Economic and Social Council, experts analysed the phenomenon of El Niño, which has affected more than 60 million people, and recommended implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in a coherent and integrated manner.

To facilitate the early entry into force of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, India deposited its instrument of ratification earlier this month. As part of our intended nationally determined contribution, we begin to move forward on the road to climate action. India will reduce its emissions intensity by 35 per cent, build a 40 per cent capacity of power generation from non-fossil fuels and create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 billion tons through various afforestation policies. India remains committed to fully embracing the Sendai Framework, and our Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi, released this year in that regard the national disaster management plan. A month from now, in early November, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, India will host in New Delhi the biennial Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, under the theme "Risk-sensitive development for community resilience".

We are happy to note that the theme for the next High-level Political Forum will be eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world. It is our expectation that the Economic and Social Council will address the sustainable development challenges, with poverty eradication as our central and overarching objective. The Economic and Social Council dialogues have been able to set the tone for the forthcoming Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review. We expect it to provide long-term strategic guidance vis-à-vis the 2030 Agenda for the United Nations development system for the years ahead. Member States should be able to count on a coherent, effective and efficient United Nations system that is focused on those services the system is uniquely qualified to deliver, based on solid intergovernmental guidance and supported with a predictable and adequate volume of flexible resources.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate India's commitment to the work of the Economic and Social Council and its active and constructive engagement in its work in the coming months.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on today's agenda items.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Economic and Social Council, contained in document A/71/3?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 9 and of agenda item 13.

Agenda item 117

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit: specific meeting focused on development

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with resolution 60/265, dated 30 June 2006, on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit, a specific meeting focused on development should be held. I have been informed that no Member State has requested to take the floor under this item.

The General Assembly has thus ended this stage of its consideration of agenda item 117.

Programme of work

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): As announced today in *The Journal of the United Nations*, I would like to inform members that delegations that wish to be added to the list of speakers for the plenary meetings of the General Assembly should make their wishes known through the e-delegates portal located at http://delegates.un.int. The e-speakers link has been open since 9 a.m. today. An automated e-mail acknowledgement will be sent within one hour of receipt of inscription. For inquiries with regard to user names and passwords, kindly contact the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management help desk at help-desk@un.org. For any other inquiries with regard to the list of speakers, please contact the list of speakers officer in the General Assembly Affairs Branch.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.